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HOLLYWOOD HUSTLER 2

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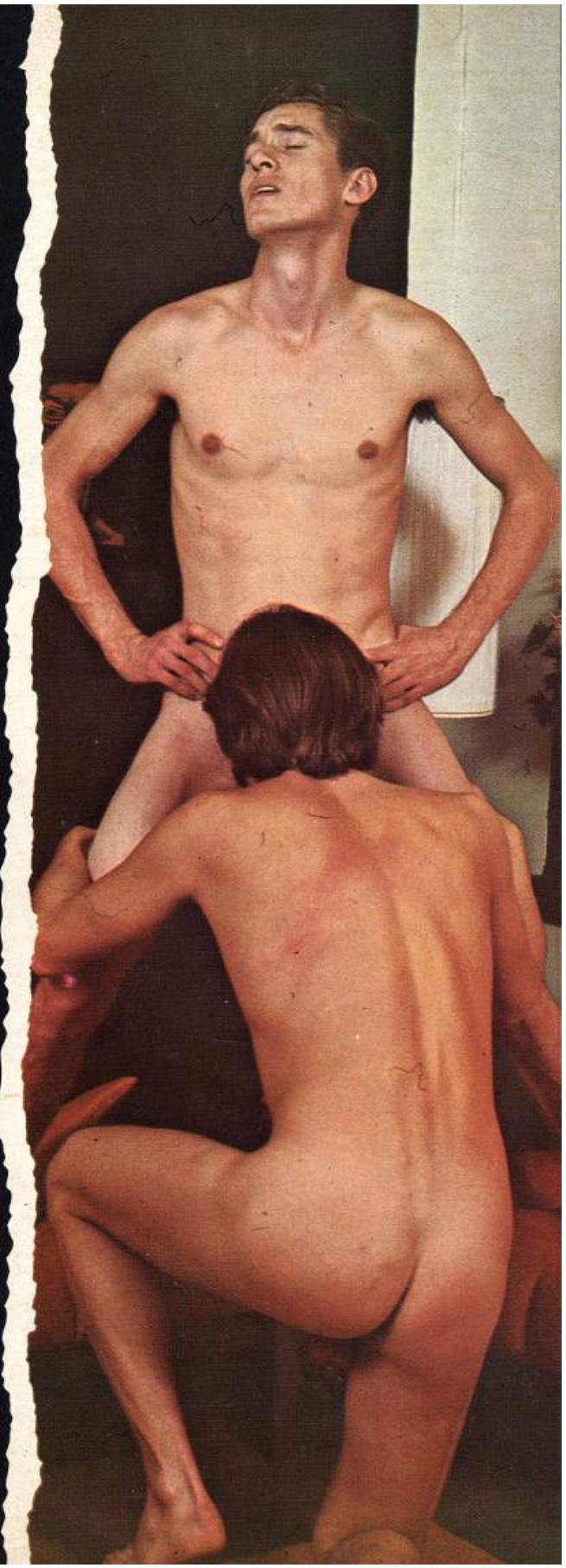

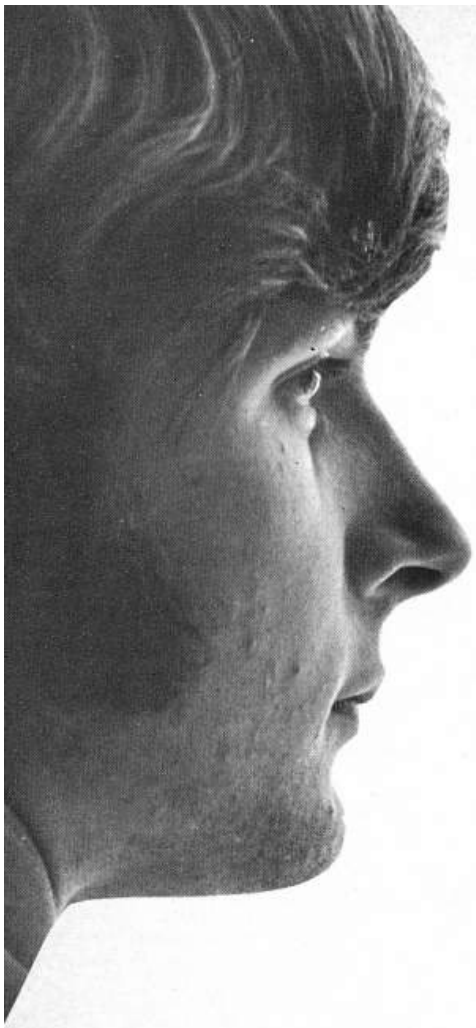

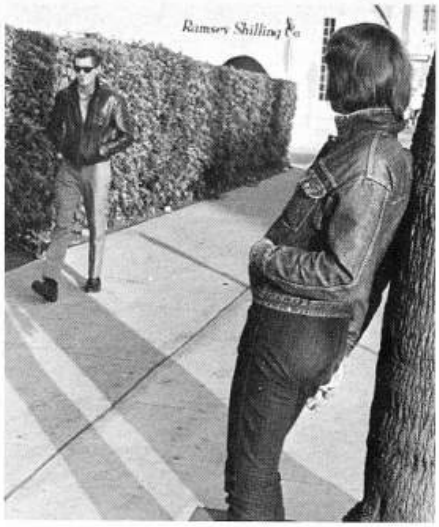

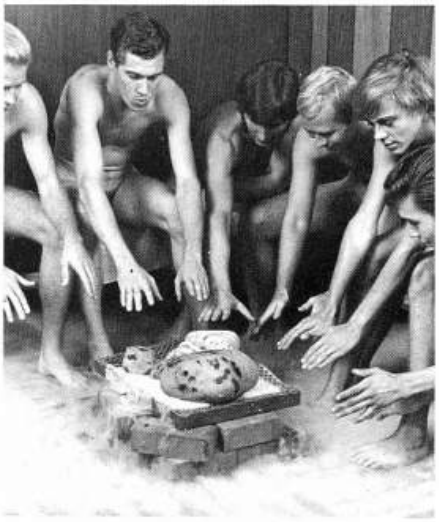

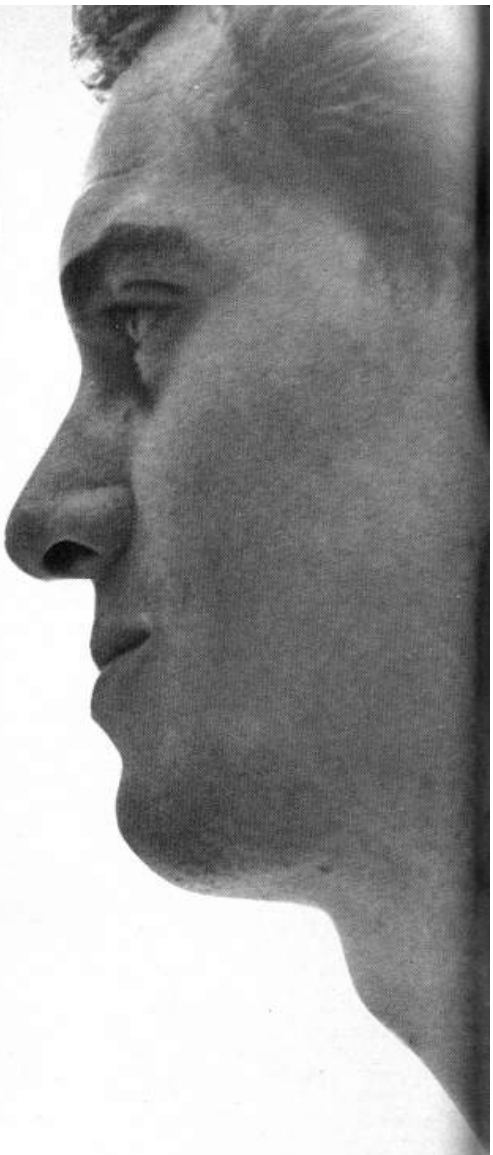

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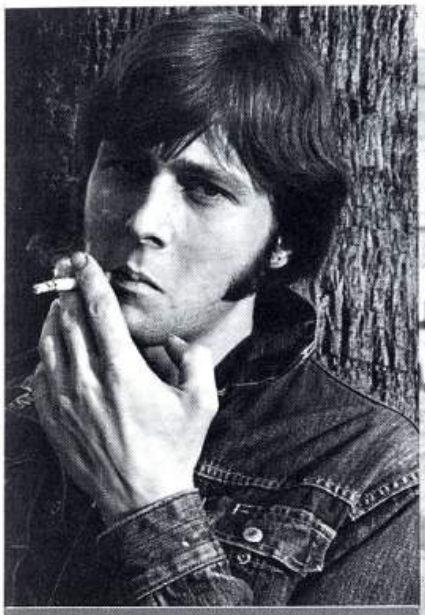
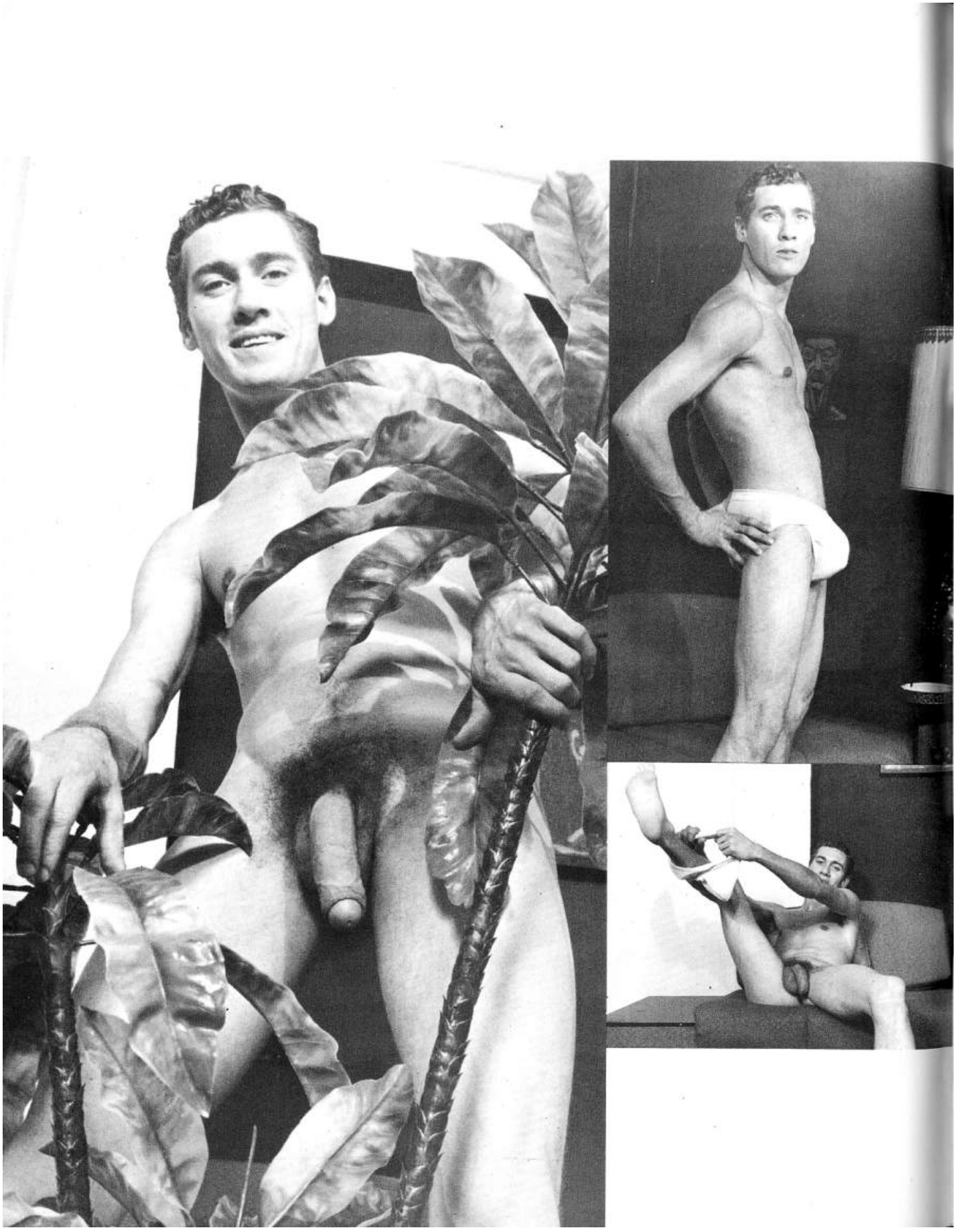


I kept having to remind myself that it was really January as I walked north on Vine Street. This time last year I had been in Providence, R.I. Now I was in Hollywood. It's a little difficult to get adjusted out here at first if you are accustomed to the change of seasons. Don't get me wrong, I like it out here. I like Hollywood very much.

I'd just left Wallich's after thumbing through the operas. It's really incredible how a record store that big can have such a paltry selection of complete operas. It strikes me as sort of a typical Hollywood syndrome when all the public buys are the "selected highlights" of the great operas. Everything in Los Angeles seems to be designed for the quick turnover—even the culture. Oh, hell, don't let me get



started on that. I could go on for hours and I really wouldn't mean it.

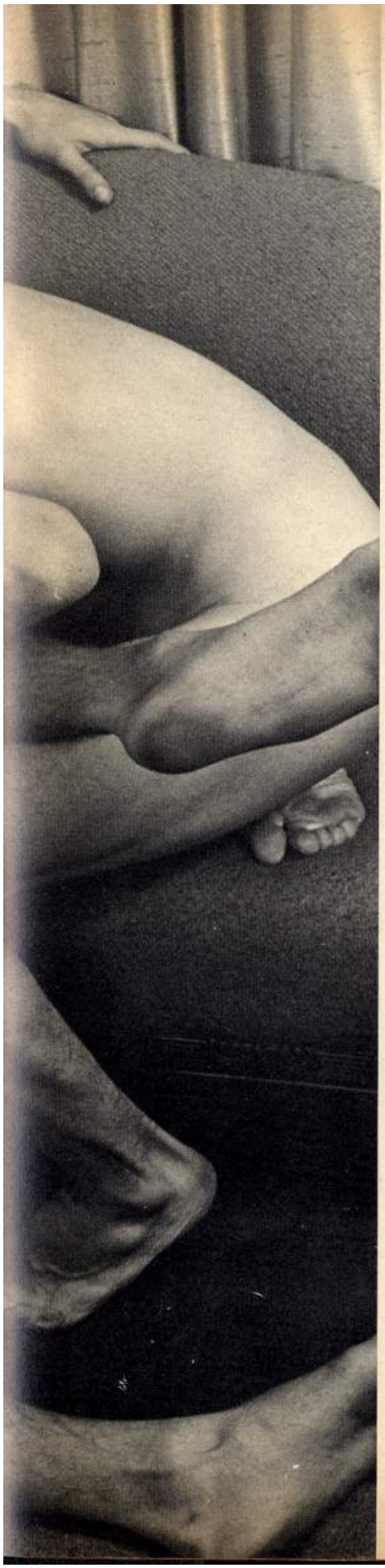
With these thoughts running around in my brain, I set a leisurely pace and headed up to the corner of Hollywood and Vine. It's funny about Hollywood and Vine. Most of us have heard about that particular intersection almost all our lives, so it takes on a kind of significance. It represents the motion picture industry—or at least the old motion picture industry. Then suddenly,

CHICAGO
BAR RAIDS

when you see it for the first time, there isn't anything special about it. It's just a crummy corner—no romance—no nostalgia—just a coffee shop and a bank and a bunch of dingy office buildings that look like they belong in Baltimore or some such place.

I just hung around the corner there waiting to see what would turn up. Oh, in case you're wondering, all this happened just about a month after I first came out here. I can't really say I just came out here because of the gay scene in L.A. There were lots of other reasons. You can make money out here, and there is a lot to be said for not having to shovel your ass out of a ton of snow in the winter when you want to go somewhere.

Anyway, I have to admit that this story has a couple of sordid moments, but I remember it fondly as you will see, so I feel it's worth telling. I was just standing there, trying to look as if I had as much right to be there as anybody else. Then this young dude showed up. It wasn't hard to get into a conversation with him. That's what's kind of nice about the Hollywood scene. There are a lot of gay guys, and you don't have to spend your entire life looking for somebody. They're all around, but you do have to know the places. (I know a lot more now than I did then.) And you do have to have the guts to stand out there. I really pity the



timid guys.

We got acquainted by means of the old "do you have a light" gag. I know a lot of guys who stopped smoking years ago who still carry lighters for just that purpose.

As I said, I was new in Los Angeles, and didn't have the vaguest idea of where to go. I certainly didn't want to take him back to my rathole of an apartment. Those older guys who